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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GREECE PART 1: TIP REPORT SUBMISSION 2006

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[1](#)1. The following is Sensitive but Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Below are Embassy Athens' responses to the 2006 TIP report questionnaire. Text is keyed to Ref A request for "Overview" Section. This is the first of four cables.

[1](#)3. SUMMARY: Greece has made significant efforts domestically and regionally in its TIP fight in 2005-06, demonstrating compelling evidence of continued, appreciable progress from the previous year. Greece shared comprehensive conviction stats on all arrests made in 2005, identified 137 victims and arrested over 200 traffickers. Greece has also taken a number of steps outside and beyond the benchmarks. It funded numerous important programs to prevent trafficking and provide for domestic shelters, legal aid, and other victim services. It has sponsored, hosted, and funded major TIP-focused international and domestic conferences, and has funded and implemented training for law enforcement authorities and others. Interministerial cooperation has been strong. The Ministry of Interior has produced a national public awareness campaign, building on the momentum of numerous press articles detailing the TIP problem in Greece (including a comprehensive, full-color expose in a weekend edition of the largest-circulation Greek daily). The MFA began a TIP working-level group and completed its Child Repatriation Agreement with Albania. Greece signed the Council of Europe's Convention against Trafficking and is progressing towards ratification of the Palermo Protocol. It is the embassy's judgment based on the progress made this year and reflected in this report, that Greece deserves to be moved to Tier 2. Looking ahead, septel will analyze how best to capitalize on current momentum in the government and in public opinion for 2007-2008. END SUMMARY.

Overview of Greece's activities to eliminate TIP:

-- A. Is the country a country of origin, transit, or destination for international trafficked men, women, or children? Specify numbers for each group; how they were trafficked, to where, and for what purpose. Does the trafficking occur within the country's borders? Does it occur in territory outside of the government's control (e.g. in a civil war situation)? Are any estimates or reliable numbers available as to the extent or magnitude of the problem? Please include any numbers of victims. What is (are) the source(s) of available information on trafficking in persons or what plans are in place (if any) to undertake documentation of trafficking? How reliable are the numbers and these sources? Are certain groups of persons more at risk of being trafficked (e.g. women and children, boys versus girls, certain ethnic groups, refugees, etc.)?

Greece is a destination and transit country for international trafficking in women and children, and to a smaller degree, men. In 2005, the GoG identified 137 victims of TIP: 104

women, 29 men, and 4 children. Seventeen perpetrators were arrested for labor trafficking in one case involving 31 adult victims from Romania. International organizations such as IOM and authorities from other destination countries report that Greece is sometimes a transit country, with victims being moved on to Italy and other EU countries. There are no official estimates of the extent or magnitude of TIP in Greece. In January 2005 sociologist and criminologist at Panteion University Grigoris Lazos estimated, based on field research, that there were between 6,100 and 6,250 victims of sex trafficking (women and teenage girls) in Greece. Lazos, a 2005 Index on Censorship Whistleblower Award winner for his "tireless campaign against human trafficking," estimated in 2003 that there were 20,000 TIP victims in Greece. Lazos is the only researcher who has made estimates of the scope of the TIP phenomenon in Greece, and he has attributed the decrease in trafficking to decreased demand for prostitution, due to lower discretionary income of Greeks. (Note: Whether actually true or not, anecdotal polling results show Greeks believe their discretionary income has decreased and that inflation is outpacing wage increases. Greeks may, therefore, less frequently visit sex workers. End Note.)

Anti-child trafficking NGOs estimated in 2004 that "hundreds" of children, mainly Roma from Albania, are victims of trafficking for labor exploitation; typically selling small items (packs of tissue or flowers), begging, or stealing. NGOs report that trafficking of children has decreased due to intensive prevention effort in Albania, and as it has become easier for Albanian parents to immigrate to Greece with their children rather than "rent" their children to traffickers as was done in the past. There are teenaged girls trafficked to Greece for commercial sexual exploitation. One anti-child trafficking NGO said that it identified one suspected child trafficking victim whose case was not accepted by the prosecutor for children. The Child Repatriation Agreement with Albania, signed in Tirana in February 2006, will address some of the problems with the protection of child victims.

-- B. Please provide a general overview of the trafficking situation in the country and any changes since the last TIP Report (e.g. changes in direction). Also briefly explain the political will to address trafficking in persons. Other items to address may include: What kind of conditions are the victims trafficked into? Which populations are targeted by the traffickers? Who are the traffickers? What methods are used to approach victims? (Are they offered lucrative jobs, sold by their families, approached by friends of friends, etc.?) What methods are used to move the victims (e.g., are false documents being used)?

Political Will to Address TIP

The Greek Government demonstrated political will at the highest levels in 2005-2006 to address trafficking in persons. Some examples of its resolve to combat TIP are below:

--March 1-2, 2006, the GoG sponsored a parallel event at the UN entitled "Regional Cooperation for Countering Trafficking in Women and Girls," organized by the NGO KEPAD with speakers including the Greek UN Perm Rep and Secretary General of Gender Equality (SGGE).

--In February 2006, the Deputy Foreign Minister signed the "Agreement for the Protection and Assistance of Children Victims of Trafficking" with Albania. (Septel)

--In February 2006, the Greek Ministries of Justice and Public Order focused their Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECPP) Ministerial on combating TIP and organized crime, agreeing on a joint declaration between nine countries to strengthen TIP actions. (Ref Athens 512)

--In February 2006 the Greek MFA provided 50,000 euros funding to the Stability Pact Thessaloniki Office for a Regional Conference on Transborder Organized Crime. (Ref Athens 346, Ref Thess 14)

--In January 2006, the MPO established 12 anti-TIP police task forces throughout Greece, in addition to the current task forces in Athens and Thessaloniki.

--In January 2006, Greece hosted a major international roundtable, organized by Egyptian First Lady Suzanne Mubarak and attended by, among others, the Queen of Sweden, business executives from major corporations such as Microsoft, and former UNSYG Boutros Boutros Ghali, to discuss the global business community's responsibility to combat TIP. The roundtable produced a statement of "Ethical Principles" regarding TIP to be adopted by businesses, which was presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos. (Ref Athens 328)

--In Fall 2005, the GoG funded the International Police Association's training seminars for Greek police in 10 cities

throughout Greece. IPA estimates the seminars reached at least 1,300 officers, with presentations by 9 different NGOs, IOM, prosecutors, police, lawyers, and university professors.

--In December 2005, the Greek Council for Refugees, with the financial support of the MFA, organized the seminar "Unaccompanied Minors: Reception, Social Inclusion, and Protection from Trafficking" at which the Minister of Justice gave opening remarks.

--In November 2005 the first MFA/IOM sponsored "Working Group" meeting was held at the MFA. By February, three meetings were held between NGOs, Governmental officials, and source, transit, and destination country diplomats stationed in Greece to work together primarily on TIP victims' protection. (Ref 05 Athens 3157)

--In November 2005 the GoG signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with 12 NGOs specifically on trafficking. (Ref 05 Athens 3110)

--In October 2005 the MFA and SGGE held a workshop in Tirana aimed at preventing trafficking of women for prostitution through sensitization, understanding the risks of sex work, and re-integration.

--In October 2005, two GoG-funded shelters were opened in Athens. (Ref 05 Athens 2742)

--In August 2005, the Parliament approved new legislation centralizing issuance of residence/work permits for victims, increasing their validity from six months to one year, and mandating a "Reflection Period" for victims. (05 Athens 2113)

--In June 2005 the Ministry of Interior's National Center for Public Administration and Local Government held a three-day conference for prosecutors, judges, and police entitled "The Role of Public Administration and the Judiciary System in Combating Discrimination and Trafficking in Humans."

--In June 2005 the 11-country Ariadne anti-TIP NGO network was established. (Ref 05 Athens 1626)

--In May 2005 the GoG supported a Training Seminar entitled "Prevention and Counteracting of Trafficking in Human Beings in the Mediterranean Region" organized by IOM Greece, IOM Italy, the Italian MFA, and the Greek MFA, MOJ, MPO, MOH, MOL, and SGGE. Speakers included TIP experts from IOs and NGOs from Geneva, Tirana, Rome, Greece, Vienna, and Ankara. Invitees to the Training Seminar were Greek NGOs, social workers, police, prosecutors, and the diplomatic corps. The Deputy Foreign Minister and nearly all members of the Interministerial Council gave opening remarks.

--In May 2005, the Thessaloniki New Democracy Party's Women's Section organized their second TIP seminar entitled "Women and Trafficking in the Balkans." Speakers included the Deputy Foreign Minister and MOH Secretary General.

Some NGOs complain that there is a lack of political will to address TIP evidenced by low numbers of identified victims. Based on the array of activities carried out by the GoG, only some of which are shown above, it is the assessment of the embassy that the government is demonstrating the political will to continue to address this issue, by focusing not only on the "benchmarks," but also on self-generated anti-TIP initiatives and ideas.

TIP Trends in Greece

--NGOs and police agree that most victims trafficked to Greece are women from former Soviet states, the Balkans and Africa. These victims work in bars, brothels, and strip clubs. In 2005, Greek law enforcement authorities and prosecutors identified the following numbers and nationalities of TIP victims: from Romania (53 victims), Russia (28), Ukraine (12), Bulgaria (9), Nigeria (8), and Moldova (7). Smaller numbers of trafficking victims were identified from the following countries: Albania (2), Armenia (2), Germany (1), Denmark (1), Eritrea (2), Estonia (1), United Kingdom (1), Kazakhstan (1), Kyrgyzstan (1), Belarus (3), Lithuania (3), The Netherlands (1), and Uzbekistan (1).

--Most victims continued to enter Greece with legal documentation, including work permits. Of the 137 victims identified in Greece in 2005, only 20 were in the country illegally. Some recognized victims also have legal, but fraudulently obtained, documentation. For example, at least four Russian victims over the past few years have reported to NGOs that their traffickers falsified visa applications to obtain visas in the victims' legal names (See Prosecution - K).

--There was an increasing trend of immigrant smugglers locking smuggled immigrants in apartments once they arrived in Greece, and demanding a "ransom" from family members in

origin countries.

--There were reports of debt bondage both by victims and by source country diplomatic representatives in Greece.

--In 2005, the trend continued of increasing numbers of African, especially Nigerian, women trafficked to Greece for sexual exploitation. Some of these women believe they are under a "spell," and will not, therefore, speak to police and/or NGOs about their possible victimization, and refuse assistance offered to them. In 2006, police and NGOs convinced at least three Nigerian women "under voodoo curses" to accept GoG assistance; those women are now defendants in ongoing trials.

-- TIP victims are subjected to withholding of documents and physical and psychological violence and threats. The trend continued of victims being trafficked into more "humane" conditions, with some freedom of movement, communication, and small stipends, but increased psychological abuse. For example, some victims' lives and the lives of their families were threatened, and traffickers told some victims they would be arrested, deported, or even killed if they went to the police.

--Some victims were forced to marry traffickers or traffickers' associates to "legalize" their status in Greece.

--NGOs report that increasing numbers of women were acting as traffickers.

-- C. What are the limitations on the government's ability to address this problem in practice? For example, is funding for police or other institutions inadequate? Is overall corruption a problem? Does the government lack the resources to aid victims?

Lack of knowledge about TIP (both generally and in terms of counter-TIP techniques and training), corruption within the Greek bureaucracy, and a slow judicial system contribute to limitations on the GoG's ability to address trafficking in practice. In an effort to educate the police force and key civil servants, the GoG conducted in 2005 a series of 10 training sessions for police personnel, judges and prosecutors throughout Greece, implemented by the International Police Association, the European Public Law Center, and IOM. In 2006, the MFA signed an agreement with the President of the Union of Prosecutors for a TIP training for prosecutors throughout Greece. (Prosecutors have responsibility for characterizing TIP victims and trying TIP cases.)

Corruption aids the traffickers. In August 2005 a TIP ring was uncovered in Thrace that included three police officers -- two of whom were reportedly "high ranking" -- accused of bringing dozens of women into Greece from Eastern Europe. The case also involved a former local mayor and members of the mayor's staff. The trial was pending as of March 1. (Ref Athens 369)

-- D. To what extent does the government systematically monitor its anti-trafficking efforts (on all fronts -- prosecution, prevention and victim protection) and periodically make available, publicly or privately and directly or through regional/international organizations, its assessments of these anti-trafficking efforts?

TIP experts at the Ministries of Justice, Public Order, Health, Interior and Foreign Affairs actively monitor the anti-trafficking efforts of the GoG in prosecution, prevention, and victim protection. The GoG makes their assessments available, both publicly and privately, directly to regional organizations, international bodies, and embassies. In the past, NGOs have criticized the GoG for producing reports only at the behest of the U.S. Embassy or without adequate consultation with NGOs. This year, the GoG coordinated with NGOs and IOM to provide information for this report, gathering some stats directly from NGOs and forwarding them as-is.

Greece 2006 TIP Report Submission Continued Septel.
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